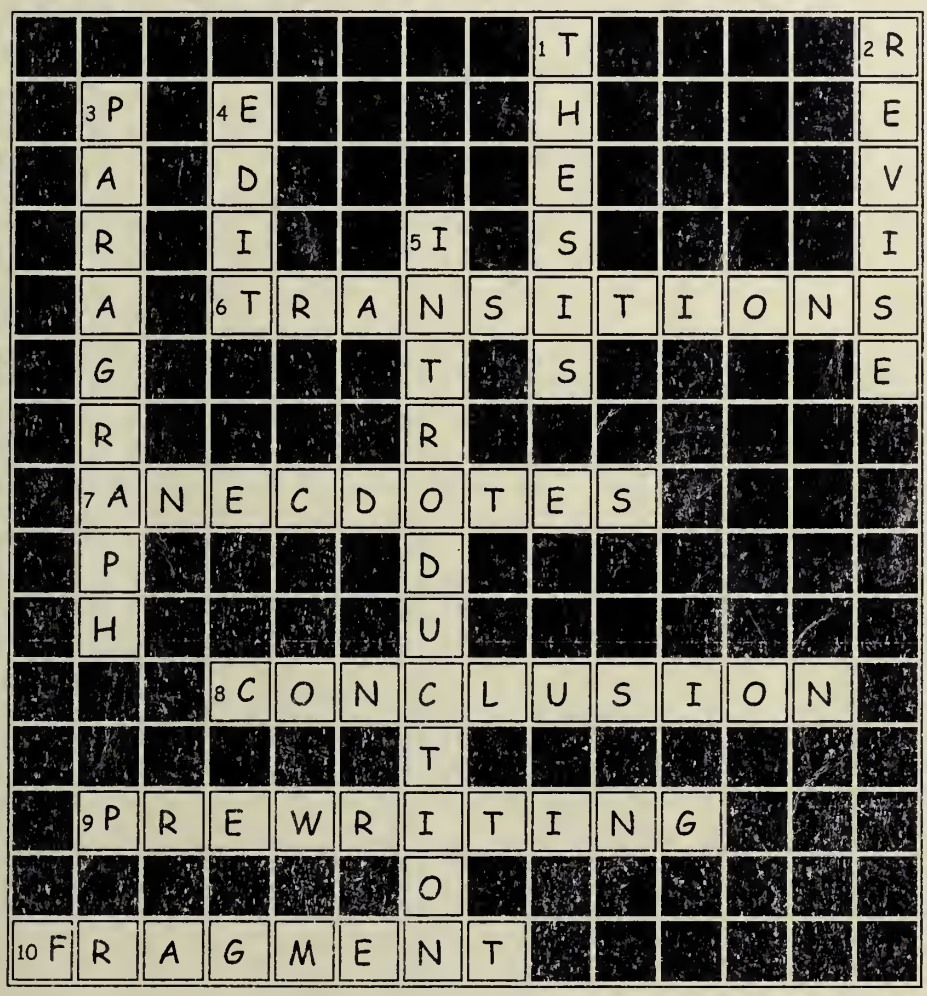
WRITERS IN PROGRESS

2012 - 2013

Essays by Basic Writing Students



Across

6. Words or phrases that connect ideas
7. Simple, short stories to develop and support ideas
8. The last paragraph in the essay that also restates the thesis
9. Generating ideas to be included in an essay
10. An incomplete sentence

Down

1. A sentence at the end of the introduction paragraph that includes the main idea of the essay
2. To review an essay and make changes
3. At least three or more sentences about the same topic
4. To correct grammar and spelling mistakes
5. The first paragraph of an essay including the thesis as the last sentence

MARGARET'S COPY

Writers in Progress

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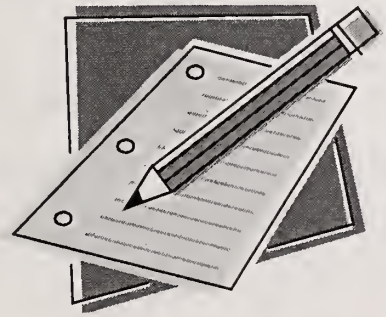

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Table of Contents

Describing a Meaningful Object:

"The Red Bracelet" by Ryan Topp.....1

"Little, Old, Wooden Walking Shoes" by Samantha Diaz.....4

"24 Hours" by Kristin M. Beals.....8

Describing a Person Who Has Influenced You:

"The Most Interesting Man in the World" by Matthew Armano.....11

"Marvelous Mr. Murphy" by Elisha Murphy.....14

"Unconditional Love" by Maria Aquino.....17

Writing a Narrative Essay, Using Dialogue:

"Tragedy at Yosemite" by Susan Bahatouris.....21

"Value of Friendship" by Kiana Sysouphanh.....25

"A Day in September" by Ernie Aquino.....30

Analyzing the Role of Media in Daily Life:

"What's on Your Mind" by Dayna Baumgartner.....36

"My New Favorite Toy: My Kindle" by Della Lee Fairbanks.....40

"Music and Me" by Armidys Anico.....44

Defending an Opinion:

"Ban Texting While Driving" by Emily Cole.....47

"Fast Digital Connection" by Loyra Perez.....50

"Dropping Out at Eighteen vs Sixteen" by Tracey Lawrence..... 55

Reflecting on Writing:

"Easier Than Ever" by Alba Castillo.....59

Introduction

By Joseph Dery

Welcome to Basic Writing! Basic Writing is a course that will teach you how to write in college and give you a chance to develop your skills as a writer. The first thing you should know as you embark upon your Basic Writing journey is that you are not alone; there are many people who will come together to help you succeed in this course. Your instructor, the tutors in the Writing Center, and even your classmates will all work together as a team to help and support you as you gain new skills and build confidence in your newfound abilities as a writer.

One important source of support and encouragement in Basic Writing is this reader, *Writers in Progress.* This book provides you with examples of the essays you will be writing this semester. Although your textbook presents clear directions for completing the essays, it is often useful to read examples of completed essays that effectively meet the demands of the assignments. These essays provide a model that illustrates the format, content, organization, and development of successful Basic Writing essays. Another way these essays can help is by providing a source of inspiration, since they were all written by last year's Basic Writing students, who began the semester with writing skills that needed practice before they could produce the polished essays you see before you.

Basic Writing students come from many different backgrounds. Some are fresh out of high school, but need a little more practice before they are ready for college writing. Many of our students are in the process of mastering English as a second language. There are also students who have been out of school for a number of years, and who have not written an essay in a long time. These students all have one thing in common: they are in a position to see great improvement in their writing skills, improvement that is made that much easier with the help and support of the Basic Writing team. By the end of the semester, students who have been attentive in class, who have made the time to come to the Writing Center, and who have passed in their completed assignments on time find that their skill in academic writing has grown, giving them the confidence to take the next step in pursuit of their goals.

As you complete your assignments for Basic Writing, your instructor and your tutors will be watching for exceptional essays to include in next year's *Writers in Progress*. Not only is it an honor to be chosen for this reader, it is a chance to give back and help next year's Basic Writing students, just as last year's students helped you by sharing their original, personal, and compelling stories in this edition of *Writers in Progress*. Thus, the cycle of support continues, as each new crop of writers begins the semester in need of guidance and support, and ends the semester by providing a helpful guide to the next group of students enrolled in Basic Writing.

Ryan Topp

Basic Writing

Object Essay

September 19, 2011

The Red Bracelet

One thing you will always see on my wrist wherever I go is my red bracelet. My bracelet is one of my most valuable possessions. Each time I look down at this bracelet, memories that I carry with me and events that I have encountered replay in my mind over and over again and make me smile. I feel happy when my bracelet helps me recall one of the most important life changing adventures that I have ever experienced.

My red bracelet is made out of leather as well as crocodile skin, giving it an appearance resembling a reptile's skin and a scaly texture that is unique, compared to your usual bracelet. It is half an inch narrow and about five inches in length, making it just snug enough around my wrist so that it is unable to fall off. When I am wearing my bracelet, it is very smooth, and I enjoy feeling the sensation that each of the different crocodile skin imprints and marks give to me. I can still smell the remarkable leather scent that the bracelet still gives off. The bracelet is held together and tied to my left wrist by a leather string, which is knotted and connected through two holes on both sides of the bracelet. With this design, the bracelet is adjustable to different wrist sizes.

My bracelet is a memorable possession that reminds me of the great adventure I was on and the people I met along the way. It is always there, wrapped around my wrist, a symbol representing all of the stories and recollections just waiting to be shared with family and friends.

I stumbled upon the bracelet when I traveled to Australia during the summer of 2011. I spent a month abroad in this beautiful country completing a People to People Student

Ambassador Program. During my stay in Australia I had to grow accustomed to the beliefs and traditions that stem from this amazing culture. This proved to be a challenge for me. While I was in the Australian outback, I quickly came to the realization that foods consumed by Americans are far different than those which are common in Australia.

My friends and I got the "chef's special" ordered by the leader, who we pleaded with in hopes that he would tell us what kind of food we were being served. At first I was hesitant to try eating new dishes, and I debated on whether or not I should just take a chance and attempt something unfamiliar to me. On the dinner plate was meat, which looked like steak. Alongside this was a bowl of soup that resembled chowder. I plugged my nose and closed my eyes and took the first chomp. My taste buds quickly became overwhelmed with all of the new and incredible flavors I have never tasted before. I was absolutely amazed, and I immediately wanted more.

After dinner, my leader announced to everyone that we had all just been served kangaroo and crocodile soup. It took me a few seconds to absorb this information. At first I was speechless and shocked. It was truly a moment that I was proud of, because I had pushed myself to do something completely different than what I am used to. On our way out of the restaurant there was a mini gift shop, where I noticed a red object out of the corner of my eye. It was a bracelet, and I couldn't help but stare at it. At that moment I knew I had to purchase it! After all, I needed something to mark my bravery and to help me remember the night I tried exotic foods. It was my first time eating kangaroo and crocodile, and this was an exciting moment for me.

My red bracelet is tied to my left wrist, and regardless of where I go or what I do, I never take it off. During the day it shares a space with a Michael Kors watch right by its side. At night, however, it has my wrist all to itself, free to slide back and forth loosely without any obstacles blocking its way.

After my trip to Australia, I sat down for my first dinner back home with my mother. I glanced down at my red bracelet trying to figure out how I was going to eat her unidentifiable cooking. It instantly took me back to my mystery meal in Australia. I looked down at my red bracelet and I suddenly found the courage to eat her meal, hoping something meaningful would come out of this dinner as well.

My red bracelet has given me the strength, and still does, to never be frightened and to try new things. I sometimes catch myself staring at my bracelet when I am in class or at work. I begin to laugh silently to myself and just smile, recalling all the moments I spent in Australia that are so cherished. The bracelet will always be with me, as I push myself each and every day to be courageous.

Samantha Diaz

Basic Writing

Object Essay

March 21, 2012

Little, Old, Wooden Walking Shoes

Have you ever had an item that no matter how old or ugly it is you seem to love it? I do. They're my very own little, old, wooden walking shoes. These shoes were given to me by my grandmother and were brought up from Puerto Rico. My mom used them when she was a baby as well as all my sisters and myself. My little, wooden walking shoes are important to me because they taught everyone in my family how to walk and taught my son Zaid how to walk, and he runs all over the place.

These rare shoes aren't the prettiest or the newest around, but they are packed with memories of my family. They were white when my grandmother first bought them, but now they are a faded, dirty white color with paint missing from the front of them from being scraped on the floor while the babies were still crawling with them. They also have a strap on the front with a golden buckle that seems to still be there and looks new. Also, there are little semi-floral designs along the top of the shoe. Whenever my son wore them, all you heard was the "click-clack" from the wooden bottom hitting the floor. Even though they have a wooden bottom they aren't heavy at all. They have a ridged slip proof bottom so the baby doesn't slip and fall when he is attempting to walk. Although my little shoes are so old and abused, they somehow seem to still have that new shoes smell to them and always had that taste of a new beginning.

The day I got the shoes changed my life. I remember when I first saw the shoes in my mom's pictures. I laughed and said I wouldn't let my son wear them, but when I received them the night of my baby shower, I seemed to be happier than ever. It was mid-April, the night of my baby shower, and I remember seeing my grandmother and smiling because she doesn't go out much. That night she showed up and stayed for my whole baby shower. After opening all the gifts and cutting the scrumptious cake, I had stepped outside to enjoy the fresh air. Shortly after, my mother followed by my grandmother came walking out onto the porch and in my mom's hands were these shoes. The same little wooden shoes from all the pictures I had seen, the same little shoes I made fun of. "Samantha, I know how much you made fun of these shoes, but they have been in the family for generations, and now it's your turn!" she then said.

"No mom, I absolutely love them!" I replied to her with the biggest smile on my face. The second I saw them I was happier than ever, even though I have made fun of them. For that second I swear it felt like Zaid felt my happiness. It felt as if he had woken up in my stomach and started doing backflips. I knew from that day forward my life was changing rapidly, and my son was going to grow quickly.

These shoes not only taught and helped my son to walk, but they also taught me, along with my sisters, their kids, and my mom. These little shoes, I can say motivated my son to get up and walk because every time we strapped them on him he tried and tried to get up and walk. So, as well as having that practical use of teaching or helping a kid to walk, they have somewhat of an emotional connection to me and my family. They also hold many memories for my mom, my grandmother, my sisters and well, now me. When my son first started walking, thanks to the help of these shoes, it was one of the greatest moments of my life and reminded me that my son was just growing and would continue to grow and make my days better and happier.

When the wooden shoes aren't being used, they can be found in a green box with a snow-man on the cover. The box can be found in two places, either my mom's room up high on her bureau or in the hallway when you first walk into my mom's house on top of a glass shelf. The shoes are kept in that box and up high to protect them from the kids who want to play with them and try to put them on. Thanks to the box there's not much cleaning and maintenance that needs to be done to them, but the first day I received the shoes they did have to be cleaned up a little due to the fact that my grandmother just had them in her closet collecting dust. We had just cleaned them with soap and water. We didn't want to use any harsh cleaning products on them because we weren't sure if they would have ruined the shoes.

I remember when I first realized that the shoes were important to me. At first I didn't want Zaid to wear the shoes, but I just started to put them on him only when we were in the house when he was around six months. He was about ten months though when he finally started walking. It was a little towards dinner time, and I had gone to my mom's house that day. My son still wasn't walking yet and my father was always complaining about it, but for some reason that day was different. He didn't originally wear the shoes to my mom's house, but I did bring them with us. He crawled to his bag and grabbed the shoes and kind of begged me, you can say, to put them on him; so I did. A little bit after that he crawled to the center table in the living room, got himself up and started walking towards me yelling with excitement because he was finally walking on his own. My parents were surprised. I was surprised because we thought he would never walk. When he finally got to me, he pointed at the shoes on his feet, smiled and laughed. Out of curiosity I took the shoes off to see if he'll continue walking and to my surprise he did. He ran to my father right after yelling and laughing with excitement. Ever since that day Zaid has been running around and can't seem to stay still and continues to point at his feet and smile.

Regardless of how old, ugly or abused an item can be, it can mean a lot more to a person than it seems. Although these little wooden walking shoes won't be used on my son anymore, they would come in handy for my new nephew or if my sisters have any more kids, or you never know, our children's kids might use them in the future. These shoes will always hold a part in my heart, and my grandmother's as well, as memories especially knowing that the same shoes that helped my mom and I walk now helped my son to start walking. They will always be around regardless of where we go, staying in that box having that new shoe smell!

Kristin M. Beals

Basic Writing

Object Essay

February 6, 2012

24 Hours

Have you ever stopped to think what you could do with 24 hours? My name is Kristin, and I am a recovering alcoholic and drug addict. Out of all the markers that you receive for various lengths of sobriety, the 24 -hour chip is the most important to me because it reminds me of the day I was able to set myself free.

It was a very cold (frigid actually) day in January of 2008 when I received my 24-hour chip. I had known somewhere deep down for a while that I needed help, but I guess I was either too stubborn to admit my problem, or too scared to face it. I had tried many times on my own to stop drinking, and using cocaine, but somehow it ALWAYS ended creeping back up on me. It wasn't until I realized that I needed help, that I finally got it. With my head hung in shame, and my shoulders feeling heavy as if I was carrying the weight of the world, I walked into a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, in the basement of the United Methodist church in Hampton, NH. I was approached by a group of happy smiling women who welcomed me with open arms. In a round robin, we had to say our names and admit that we were alcoholics. After a few stories, a person from the group stood in front of the room, held up a shiny silver circle, and said, “If you haven't had a drink or a drug in 24 hours come on up.” My palms were sweaty and my knuckles clenched tightly to the edge of my seat, but with all the courage I could muster, I stood and walked to the front of the room. With tears in my eyes I reached my hand out, and she set that 24 hour chip in my hand, reached around me with her other embracing me and said, "Congratulations you've taken the first step to the rest of your life."

My chip is round, shiny and silver, and as big as a half dollar. It looks like plastic, but if you drop it, it sounds as if it were made of metal. It is as light as a feather. It's smooth all the way around, and has raised writing. If you close your eyes you can rub your fingers over it, you can make out a triangle and the numbers “2” and “4.” It also has the words “To Thine Own Self Be True,” as well as the Serenity Prayer on the back. The feeling of that chip in my hand was overwhelming. It was cold at first but quickly became hot and sweaty. It felt as if for the first time in a really long time that I had hope, and that even if just a little, that the weight of the world was slowly being lifted off my shoulders. It made me feel warm, warm in the fact that I could now look into the light instead of hiding in the darkness.

I have two different places for my chip. One is in my wallet so when I open it I can look at it. If I am going out somewhere to a function, or a place that is serving alcohol, I keep it in my right hand pocket, so that it's there for me to touch if I'm feeling out of my comfort zone. I'm very protective of my chip because it reminds me of where I've been and also how far I've come. I know where it is at all times. It also reminds me of the maintenance that I have to do on a daily basis, which is to go to meetings, ask for help, stay away from a drink or a drug one day at a time, to take a fearless moral inventory of myself and if I was wrong, to admit it, and to carry the message of hope and recovery with me.

I remember that after some time working with that same group that I had met that first frigid day in January, that it was my turn for service, and to stand before this incredible group of men and women and ask the question, "Is there anybody here that has stayed away from a drink or a drug for 24 hours?" Looking around that room, a middle aged gentleman stood up and started walking toward me. I could see myself in him from my first day here, the same guilt and shame. He stood in front of me, as I put that 24-

hour chip in his hand, and embraced him with my other, I said, "Welcome to the first day of the rest of your life." It was truly an honor and a privilege to be the one to hand him that chip.

I keep my chip and the message with me everywhere I go and with everything that I do. It keeps me grounded and it is the most important of all my possessions. It's funny how something so small can have such huge meaning. I do still have hard days, but I also know that they are nothing compared to what they used to be. I'm grateful for each and every day; I live today as if it were a gift, and always knowing twenty four hours, ONE day is all it took to change my life.

Matthew Armano

Basic Writing

Person Essay

July 11, 2011

The Most Interesting Man in the World

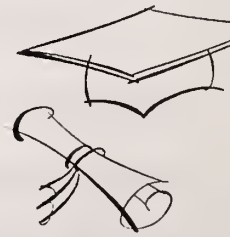
Michael Joseph Domenic Armano II has been one of the greatest influences in my life. He is always helping me, relieving my stress and taking away my worries. Although Mike is my brother, he is also sometimes like a third parent to me. He is ambitious, intelligent, and a wonderful role model with a brilliant sense of humor.

My brother has an average height of five feet, ten inches, weighs about 170 pounds, and has a muscular body type. He is a clean-shaven white male with tan skin. He has short curly brown hair, green eyes, bushy eyebrows, a medium-sized nose and full lips. Mike has one tattoo of a Sicilian symbol of a three legged man on the top of his back. He glides across the floor at a steady pace, but keeps good posture. Michael speaks in a deep reassuring voice. Mike sets high standards about his appearance when he goes out or heads to work. He wears a full pin-striped suit, complete with a tie, silver watch, Armani cologne, and black designer dress shoes. When Michael is relaxing, he usually wears a pair of old running shorts and a tight t-shirt. The Armano traits, combined with my brother's sense of style, prove him to be a good looking man.

One of my brother's many good qualities is his ambitious character. In fact, he is constantly working towards achieving another goal. He has not only been known to hold several jobs, but he has entered into several careers. In addition to working as a firefighter, he is a licensed attorney, massage therapist, real estate broker, and real estate instructor. He also owns a real estate brokerage, a law office, and an online ticket agency. In addition to passing the Massachusetts Bar Exam, he pushed himself to earn a license in Maine and in New Hampshire

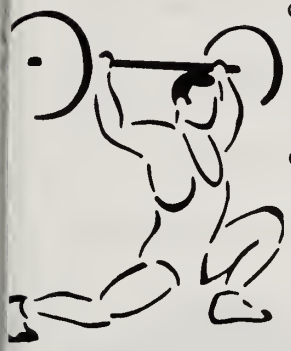
while opening his law office and working full time hours at a security job. Mike's ambitious qualities have benefited me as well. When I graduated middle school, my parents and my brother enabled me to attend Central Catholic High School because my brother offered to work extra to pay for some of my education. If it was not for him, I would not have been able to go to the school of my choice. Whenever I see Michael at home I always ask him what he is doing or where he is going. More often than not he says, "getting ready for work," "looking over something for work" or "studying for my class." Everything he does is related to working. His ambition, his persistence and "work hard" attitude are qualities that I can appreciate.

Michael has gained intelligence and true wisdom over the years. He has obtained his Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Massachusetts-Lowell and a Juris Doctorate's degree from the Massachusetts School of Law. He is the first person I have approached for any help with school work throughout the years. My brother has helped me with many projects, but one specific time I remember very well. When I was a junior in high school, I had a big physics project due the next day, it was already ten at night and I could not figure it out. He walked in after work and saw that I was frustrated and instantly sat down, figured out where I had gone wrong and how I could fix it. He spent the next hour sitting with me, giving me ideas, helping me perfect my drawings and calculations. I could not believe he remembered the physics from when he was in high school. Although this does not seem like much, it inspired me to learn more and become as intelligent as him.



Another amazing thing about Mike is his ability to set a great example as a role model. Michael is always the first person to compliment someone when they are down, congratulate someone for a small but meaningful accomplishment, or to push someone to excel to their full potential. My brother is the type of person who will always give me respect, even if I have

messed up or done something wrong. He always finds potential reasons for why people do



certain things or act a particular way. Mike always leads me in the right direction. When he started bringing me to the gym to lift, he described everything to me in fine detail to make sure I was doing everything right. Michael also made sure I was eating properly. He explained protein as "building blocks for my muscles." Every time I saw him for weeks he would tell me, "Make sure you're eating enough protein!" or "You're young you can eat as much as you want! Take advantage!" Mike has encouraged me to work harder every day. My brother is an awesome role model because of his ability to see past my weaknesses and find my strengths.

Michael has a great sense of humor that constantly makes me laugh and smile. My brother's jokes always seem to come out when I am mad about something. He uses them to attempt to lighten the mood and calm me down. Mike has sort of a dry humor. For example, he set his phone to ring as a dog barking whenever his children's mother would call because she would call and nag him numerous times a day. When I was young and naïve he responded to me stating "I'm hungry" with "Nice to meet you Hungry. I'm Michael." Of course back then I did not find it funny by any means, but now I can look back on it and laugh about it. My brother's sense of humor keeps his many serious moments more relaxed and manageable.

Michael is my greatest role model because of his ambition, intelligence, witty sense of humor, and strong character. He leads me through the right doorways and keeps me on track. His positive influence will continue to affect me for the rest of my life. Michael Joseph Domenic Armano II is more than just a brother. He is my friend, teacher, coach and mentor.

Elisha Murphy

Basic Writing

Person Essay

October 12, 2011

Marvelous Mr. Murphy

Do you know someone who makes you want to be a better person? Have you ever known someone that you aspire to be like? Have you ever met someone that makes you feel better just for knowing them? I have. It's my father, Anthony Murphy. He has been the biggest influence in my life. He has assisted me in setting the rules that I use as a guide to my life. He has been there since the day I was born, and I know that I can always count on him. My dad is a very helpful, motivated, loyal, and personable man.

My dad is a very handsome man. He is forty six years old. He has light brown skin and is about five foot ten inches and 230 pounds. He has a bald head that he keeps that way by choice. He shaves his head just about every day. He also has a beard and moustache that are brown but are slowly being overtaken by gray hair. He has light brown eyes the color of Sugar Babies candy. He has his eyebrow pierced to match mine. We got it done for my sixteenth birthday. He also has his ears pierced. His right lobe has one earring and his left has two earrings in the lobe and an 'industrial,' which is a barbell that goes from the top of his ear to the side. He has a slightly muscled physique from going to the gym about five days a week. He has a lot of tattoos. One on his upper right arm is a ribbon with all four of his children's names on it wrapped around a rose and a stem. On the end of the ribbon it says, "I'll die for those I love." He has an eagle flying over a mountain scene on his left arm and a wizard on his forearm. He also has the letters "RUSH" on his knuckles. He smells like Old Spice soap with a

hint of cigars. He is usually wearing a plain colored t-shirt with a pocket and a pair of jeans with some New Balance sneakers. Those are his favorite brand. If it's cold he might be seen wearing a zip-up sweatshirt, if I haven't stolen them all!

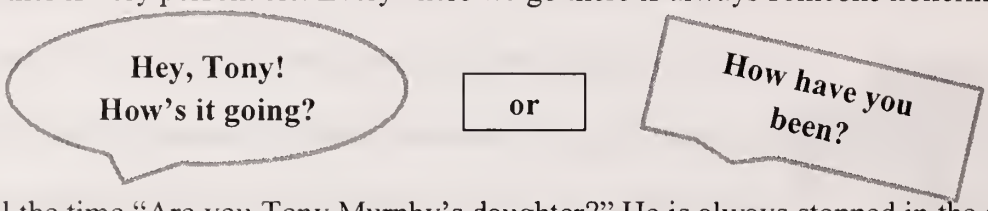
To my father, being helpful comes naturally. He tries to act so tough on the outside, but he has a really soft heart. He plows peoples' driveways in the winter if he knows they are having trouble. Last winter I could not even leave my driveway because of all the snow. My car got stuck and he arrived and plowed me out so that I could go to the store. He is usually quick to offer his assistance to drive if someone is moving since he has a truck. He likes to offer his advice to anyone that is looking for his opinion if they are having an issue. Seeing him do these tasks makes me want to help people as well because he looks like it makes him happy.

Motivation is also a quality that I admire in my father. He decided that he wanted to better his life so he just did it. About ten years ago he stopped drinking, stopped smoking and went back to school. He got his GED and took a few college classes. By doing this he got a higher quality job and was able to make a better living to support his family. Any time he wants to lose weight he just goes on a diet and off comes the weight (lucky!) just because he has the motivation to get what he wants. He pushes his kids to be better and stays behind us so that we can be inspired to accomplish great things in our lives. This is a quality that I am trying to get more of myself, and I am still trying to learn from him.

My dad is a very loyal man. He has been married to my mom for twenty eight years. He is oblivious when it comes to other women. One time we were at a restaurant and our waitress was hitting on him and he had no clue. When we mentioned it to him he said we were lying, she was just being nice. He said, "I have no idea what you're talking about."

"You are so naïve," I told him and rolled my eyes. He is very dedicated to his family. He is the provider and the head of our family even though all of us children are grown up now. He would still do anything to protect us and just be there for us if we ever need him. We are the most important people in his life, and we know it.

My father is very personable. Everywhere we go there is always someone hollering out to him



I get asked all the time "Are you Tony Murphy's daughter?" He is always stopped in the store or while walking down the street by an old friend or acquaintance to say hello. One time we were all the way in Boston, and somehow he still had to talk to someone he knew. I can't take him anywhere, but I wouldn't change it. I get my outgoing personality from him.

Being helpful, loyal, motivated, and personable are only a few of the attributes that I have learned from my father. He taught me how to ride a bike and the difference between right and wrong, but most of all he taught me how to be a good person. This man is the man that taught me the values that I base all my decisions by. I love my daddy. He has been a huge influence on my life, and I hope that I can be half of the woman that he raised me to be.

Maria Aquino

Basic Writing

Person Essay

February 25, 2012

Unconditional Love

I remember as a child the long windy days in Queens, New York as this person walked me every single morning to the bus stop then awaited my arrival so eagerly for me to get home

from school. Throughout all the seasons: winter, spring, summer, and fall, her dedication toward me was beyond measure. She would always wait right in front of the bus stop for me, not caring if it was below zero out or ninety degrees out. She was there and that alone shows me how much she loves me. As a child, coming home from school to a hot meal every day was more than I could ask for. She is my best friend and has always been in my life, even before I was born. My mother, Aracelis Mendez, is my role model because she is ambitious, caring, and full of life.

My mom is so cute. She is the second shortest in my family measuring five feet tall. Her hair is wavy and shoulder length. The color is like dark coffee, and she always pins her hair up. Her skin is radiant; her light complexion complements her light brown eyes. She has well-defined facial structures. When she smiles, she brings comfort and a sense of joy to others. My mom wears white tee shirts and dark jeans most of the time. It's her chef uniform. Her walk is very determined. When she sits, it's always in a graceful manner. She values her pearl stud earrings that my sister gave to her for Christmas a few years ago. Her personality is best described in saying, it's bigger than her physical body. She weighs 120 pounds and my dad enjoys picking her up all the time, although she doesn't like it. It's kind of funny after because

she starts laughing about it. My mother can't stay mad at a person for long. Her kind heart won't allow it.

My mother is ambitious to me because she was able to fulfill her goals. In 2009, my mother opened her own business. She has always wanted to be a boss and manage her own business. Catering many weddings of over 400 people, she began to rise as the boss that she had envisioned herself becoming. She is a visionary. She saw this goal in her mind, and she didn't rest until her goal became reality. She inspires me to be ambitious. I remember when she had asked me to help her cater a wedding. I didn't want to help because I wanted to hang out with my friends. So she sat me down and said to me, "Maria, in life you never know what you will be doing. I went to school for fashion design, not for culinary art, but I am a chef now! Take hold of every opportunity life gives you and be grateful." This opened my eyes to see that she was right. It was more important to help my mom. What I find so extraordinary about my mom is that she wasn't worrying about how she needed help, but she was more concerned in teaching me a life lesson that would help me stand strong in the future. Her actions and positive attitude towards life have influenced me in many different ways to be the best in all I do.

Caring is part of my mother's personality. It's as if she was born with this quality in her DNA traits. Some people need to be taught to care about others, but for my mom caring is second nature. I remember years ago, the time that my ex-boyfriend at that time had been going through a very hard time so he came to my house for advice. He ended up running up to my mom and not expecting a hug, my mother hugged him as if she knew exactly what he was going through. A few seconds later tears start to come out. I was not expecting that because my ex had a very narrow "sweat, blood but never tears" mentality. My mother hugged him and cared for him as she would for me. She has a caring heart to see others happy. If somebody is unhappy in

her mind, she will let that person know that everything will be ok. I thought that was so sweet of her. I value that about my mom. She has shown love for others in so many ways, never expecting anything in return, simply just caring. It's those kinds of actions that speak the loudest to me. Her qualities make me want to be like her in so many ways, caring in such an authentic way. I remember the first time I went to elementary school. It was a very long morning for me. I was so scared. The fact of recently moving to Orlando, Florida was already stressing me out. I

remember my mom waking me up very cheerfully and joyfully. She said, "Time for school! Time to meet new friends and learn. Wake up! Wake up! Wake up!" I was so nervous. So my mother took me to school, and my nerves were so wacky that morning that I started to cry. To make a long story short, my mother ended up staying in class with me until school was over. I look back at this and laugh so hard. I made her give me her keys, and she had to stay with me in class until I was done. This lasted a week until I could finally get adjusted to school. My mother is such a blessing in my life. All of the small sacrifices she has done for me have shown me the true love of a mother. Looking back on this makes me realize all of the tight situations I put my mother in, but regardless of them all, my mother was always ready to pour out her unconditional caring love to me and those around her.

Last but not least, my mother is full of life. She brings life to a party. There isn't a single holiday event that my mom is not hosting. In my family we all know that for every get together the party is at my house. She has a positive energy that bounces all over the room and everywhere she goes. Not only would my family gather for just parties; when my cousin passed away in 2010 my house was packed full of family and friends. That day the entire earth stood completely still before my eyes. My mother received that phone call and a few minutes later the driveway of my house was full. I saw my mother becoming a mother for many more. Her personality reflects hope. I understood why my family gathered at my house to remember the life

of my cousin. It was a hard year for everybody in my family. Knowing that my mother could give hope to others means a great deal to me. My mother is full of life in good and bad moments. Every time she and I talk, she reminds me to be the salt of the earth or the light in the darkness. It means a lot to me when she encourages me to be the best I can be. I have achieved many things because of her positive influence in my life. In my heart I know because of her qualities I will continue to succeed in life.

As I reflect upon the ambition, the caring heart and the fullness of life that my mother portrays as a person and mother, I begin to realize how important she is to me, how she held my hand as she walked me to my bus as a child, and how she encourages and supports my goals now. She would constantly go out of her way to give me the world beginning from that first step of moving away from the Dominican Republic and coming to the United States for my best, and ending in the fact that she has promised to be in my life until she can no longer breathe. Even then the qualities of my mother will remain alive in my life. She inspires me to be myself and to value others, to give unconditional love in the good and bad days because everything in life tends to unfold as it should. I am more than proud to say Aracelis Mendez is my mother. It's been an honor and privilege to only have written a droplet of how wonderful my mother is. I am sure that my future is bright with her in my life. The values she has embedded in me are priceless and I am so thankful for my mother. The next time I face a hard moment I can say with assurance that I have a reason to smile because I am loved unconditionally! Some are loved and do not realize it, those who do realize it I call wise. I thank God for giving me such a role model in life.

Susan Bahatouris

Basic Writing

Narrative Essay

March 20, 2012

Tragedy at Yosemite

As the sun rose up over the beautiful granite mountain peaks it was a typical crystal clear gorgeous day in Yosemite National Park in California. As I crawled out of my tent in the

campground that was nestled in the valley of Yosemite National Park, it was warm, the sun was out, and a warm gentle breeze swept through the breathtaking valley. I could still smell the odor of last night's camp fire, along with the morning's smell of bacon and coffee as all of the campers were up cooking and preparing for a day of hiking, biking, swimming, or just relaxing in Yosemite. Little did I know what events were about to unfold on that beautiful summer day in July.

It was the first day of our vacation. I was living in Southern California at the time. Mark and Kim were great friends of mine from Massachusetts that I grew up with and they came to visit my husband and me in California and met us in Yosemite for a camping trip. This was their first trip to California so we were very excited to show them Yosemite. My in-laws, Garland and Arnoldene, also joined us for the camping trip. They were wonderful in-laws; I was so happy that they had been a part of our vacation.

In the 1980's I spent a lot of time in Yosemite with my husband hiking and backpacking. When you look at the majestic beauty of the mountains and the nature that surrounds it you forget how danger can sometimes be a part of the beauty. The granite peaks in Yosemite are so breathtaking that you are just drawn into the majesty of the entire valley; it is so overwhelming that you can only sit and stare for hours to try and grasp the beauty of it all. The events that

happened during that 24-hour period at Yosemite taught me not only to enjoy the natural beauty of the mountains, but to always respect your surroundings or any potential dangers. Mother Nature can be very unpredictable and unforgiving. During the day it began to get cloudy with an occasional thunderstorm, some of the storms were pretty severe, you could actually see the chain lightning stretching it's intense power across the valley from granite peak to granite peak.

My husband and Mark headed for the base of Half Dome, one of Yosemite's most famous peaks. That day they were planning to climb the steel ladder up the backside of Half Dome to its summit. They were only gone for two hours and I saw them coming back to the campsite. I said, "Craig, why are you guys back so soon?"

Craig said, "When we reached the base of Half Dome we decided not to risk making the climb because of the scattered thunderstorms."

I asked, "Were some climbers still going up?"

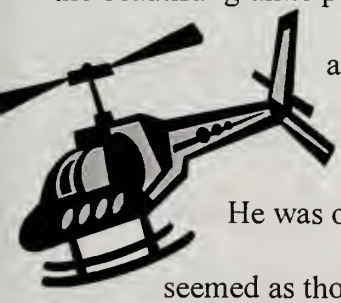
He answered, "Yeah, but they are insane." He went on to say, "There are signs posted right before you start the climb that say you should turn back immediately if there is any sign of bad weather, especially thunderstorms!"

By that evening the thunderstorms had passed and it was gorgeous outside, warm and beautiful, clear skies. After we ate we went to a campfire in the valley and there was a park ranger that was speaking and answering any questions from the campers. During the discussion we all noticed on the summit of Half Dome there were lights flashing on and off. One camper asked, "What are the flashing lights that we are seeing up there?"

The ranger answered, "Sometimes hikers decide to spend the night on top of Half Dome; there are caves on the summit for shelter. We don't recommend it, but we cannot prevent it, people do it all the time." He went on to say, "The lights you see are SOS or a distress call, ninety nine percent of the time the campers just do it for fun to attract attention from campers in

the valley. We really hate it when they do it for that reason because if it keeps up long enough we have to send a rescue team up in the dark and of course that is very dangerous and usually the SOS is a hoax." So the campers began flashing their flashlights back at the campers on top of Half Dome for fun! Well, for what we thought was fun at the time.

Unfortunately this night it was no hoax. This date will be etched in my mind forever: July 28, 1985. We all were awoken very early to the sound of helicopters, it must have been at least two and they were very loud. Everyone started coming out of their tents and heading over to where there were fire trucks, ambulances, and police gathered. I walked up to one of the officers and asked him, "What is going on?"

The officer said, "Two rock climbers were killed by lightning last night and three others were injured." He went on to say, "One of the climbers apparently I heard, was struck by lightning in the head and went over the edge of Half Dome, the other three were injured; two of them very seriously." I never responded, I could not speak, I felt sick to my stomach. The beautiful Yosemite that I had come to love so much from such an early age had now put such a chill and fearful feeling inside of my body that all I could do was stand there in the valley with the beautiful granite peaks surrounding me and the beautiful Ahwahnee Hotel in the far distance  and watch as the helicopters slowly descended to the valley floor with a body bag hanging from one helicopter carrying one of the dead climbers. He was only sixteen years old. The other helicopter carried the three survivors. It seemed as though it was an eternity to stand there and witness this horrible tragedy. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, the climber that fell to his death was found by other hikers. We ended our trip to Yosemite early and traveled to another area to try and forget what we saw

that horrible day. The events that took place that beautiful July day at Yosemite National Park would not only be a national tragedy, but later would make the cover of *Life* magazine.

My experience that day in Yosemite National Park taught me several lessons; always respect nature, pay close attention and obey any warnings that you might see or hear, and never fake a call for help because you may cause another person to lose their life. If a time comes when you really are in danger, you may not be taken seriously. Cherish the people that you love most, family and friends. I was thankful as I left Yosemite that summer day in July; I left with my loved ones and friends. My heart ached for the friends and families of the two hikers who lost their lives and the other injured hikers.

Enjoy nature to the fullest, but have the utmost respect for her. Every time I see the famous black and white photograph taken by Ansel Adams of Yosemite National Park with the majestic Half Dome in the distance, it brings me back to a beautiful place that I will always love and respect. I will never forget how one 24- hour day there will be with me forever at Yosemite National Park in California.

Randi Parent

Kiana Sysouphanh

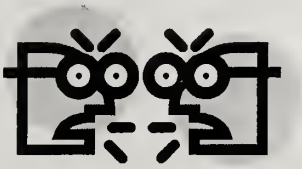
Basic Writing

Narrative Essay

Spring 2012

Value of Friendship

I remember on that summer day the weather was perfect and outside seemed so nice, but
what was happening in the homes?
inside of our homes the total opposite was happening. It was our senior year vacation, and my best friend of four years, Zach, and I just wanted to go enjoy the day. Both of our parents had
what other plans?
other plans when they decided to give us a hard time with nagging



Arguments about...?
lectures. The arguments escalated to the point where things almost got
why did things almost get physical?
physical between Zach and his parents. We figured we'd go for a walk to get our minds off things and before things got worse. Being friends for years we always knew we could cheer each other up. Usually just being together would calm us down, but that day was
what about that day is different.
different. We both had so much anger built up inside of us that we were getting on each other's
Why?
nerves, (and this got us even more irritated.) It would have been better off if we'd given each other
(because) why should you have given eachother space.
space that day, but for some reason I had a feeling I didn't want to leave him alone.

He got a phone call from his grandparents who told him that they had heard we both got into disputes with our parents. "We're out of town this weekend, you two go on over to our house before you get into any more trouble," they told us. We were getting tired of walking so
where were you walking?
we were happy to get that call from them, and lucky for us the walk wasn't far from where we
a Road? a Park? a driveway?
were. Since we both were already annoyed with how the day was going, in that short amount of time we somehow managed to get into a silly argument about whether we should go get the car
who's car?
or just walk. Despite the little arguments we had the whole way, we continued to walk together and didn't separate, and we made it to his grandparents' house. Once we got inside their house

we both just sat down on the couch. To resolve the awkward tension between us I thought it

Why was their awkward tension?

would be good if we talked about everything that happened. I started by saying calmly, "You scared me today, I thought you were going to hit your dad."

"Well he shouldn't act so tough all the time," Zach bluntly answered.

"I don't see how you can be mad at him when you act the same way toward everyone."

who compares them?

Zach and his dad never had a good relationship, and Zach hated being compared to him. When I said that I think it triggered something because then he shouted, "Mind your business you don't see me telling you how to act whenever you're screaming at your mom all day!"

He could never handle stress well, but when he shouted at me I knew he must have been

Why do you think he shouted?

really furious. Full of anger, he took off to their guestroom while I stayed in the living room watching TV because I was still in shock at how mad he got at me. We both knew we really weren't even mad at each other, but we were both so stubborn that one thing we never did was apologize or say sorry. And why not? Why do you both never say sorry?

I had been to his grandparents' house a lot during the years me and Zach were friends,

why don't you like being alone

but I wasn't completely comfortable in their home yet. I also never liked being alone, so after an

what made you scared?

hour or so I started getting a weird feeling and got kind of scared. I decided to go check on Zach to see if he was awake yet. When I entered the guest room I looked around to see that he had fallen asleep with the TV on and was lying on the couch. Since I was still uncomfortable to be by myself I just sat on the bottom of the couch where he was quietly sleeping.

After a little while I eventually dozed off, but I suddenly woke up to find him on the

jerking? Explain... seizuring?

floor. I thought he had accidently fallen off the bed until I realized he was jerking out of control; he was having a seizure. Immediately I jumped up and started screaming his name. Things got

↑ O.K.

worse when I realized he had knocked down and was lying on top of a mirror that was leaning by the couch. A million horrible thoughts were running through my head but I knew I had to do something. Zach had an athletic build. He was tall, about five feet and nine inches, and weighed around 160 pounds, so he was already hard to move, but it was even worse since his whole body was tensed up and he was twitching uncontrollably. I managed to get him off of the broken mirror without either of us getting hurt. All of this happened in a matter of minutes, but it seemed like forever and I thought he was never going to stop.

what kinds of horrible thoughts?

Now the mirror is Broken?

what made it seem like forever?

The only thing I ever remember hearing about seizures was that people could suffocate by choking on their tongue. Without really thinking I had slipped two of my fingers to open an air passage to his throat. I felt him bite, so I quickly pulled my hand back, but he ended up getting lockjaw on my hand. "Aaahh! Zach please wake up!" I cried. I tried to grab my phone, but I had set it down on the dresser. He was gripping my hand so hard I couldn't even pull my body to reach it. By this time he was completely purple and his whole body was sweaty. I tried to use my other hand to try and open his mouth to slip my fingers out, but he had such a strong grip. The pain in my fingers was so intolerable it felt like he was going to bite them off. I looked back at him and I knew I had to get my phone for help. By then I had already lost feelings in my fingers and I just ripped them out from his teeth.

where did you hear that? Is it accurate information?

Explain Lockjaw

OUCH!

I grabbed my phone and called 911. The operator picked up, "911 what's your emergency?" I was hysterical when I tried to answer, and I don't think she understood me because she kept trying to calm me down. I thought things couldn't get any worse, and then the operator asked me, "What is the address where this emergency is happening?" My mind drew a blank; out of all the times I had visited I had no idea what it was. I quickly ran outside to see if there was a street sign and a number on the house. The sign was too far and his grandparents' house had too many decorations covering their front lawn. I couldn't find the number. I ran back

saying what? How was she trying to calm you down?

inside, and I ended up finding an envelope attached to their fridge. I read them the address and the operator said help was on the way.

I felt relieved a little until I ran back to the guest room. I saw that Zach's seizure had stopped and he was lying on the floor with his whole body purple and unconscious. In my head this was my fault, I had taken too long to get help, and I thought he was dead. I put my hands on his chest above his heart and was relieved when I felt his heartbeat. It felt like hours had passed

waiting for the ambulance to arrive, and finally I heard a knock on the

How long exactly did it take?

door. It was the police and two paramedics. They asked me to stay out of the room and to go wait outside. This made me a little mad because I had been with Zach the whole time and I didn't want to leave his side.

I was surprised when Zach's mom arrived soon after. Once she arrived, she and the

what kind of questions?

police seemed like they asked me a million questions. Too much was going on all at once and the last thing I wanted to do was answer to everyone. There was a moment of silence when everyone

was Zach O.K.? Did he speak?

paused to see that the paramedics were removing Zach from the house on a stretcher. Words can't explain how happy I was when I saw he was conscious again. His appearance was pale and his skin was clammy. He was sitting up on the stretcher and he just looked clueless. We made eye contact, but he just had a blank expression on his face as if he was confused and didn't even know who I was; my heart sank. Did he say any words?

They didn't let me get in the ambulance with him, but his mom and I followed behind to

About...

the hospital. During the car ride I started to think; it was like I envisioned every moment me and Zach had ever been through together. I realized we were inseparable since the first time we met and were always there for each other since day one. Then I thought about the argument we had before his seizure. A strong feeling of guilt just came to me and I felt so bad. I asked myself how

bad I would have felt if the worst had happened and the last things he heard from me were harsh words.

The doctor came and told us we were allowed in the room. My heart was racing. I didn't know what to expect when I walked in the room. I was glad he was alive, but I wasn't sure if any permanent damage had affected him physically or internally. Once I saw Zach I just hugged him and cried. He said that the doctors told him he was going to be fine, and they weren't positive about what caused his seizure. That day was the first time we apologized to each other, and we promised not to let any stupid fights come between us.

what did the room look like?

That horrible incident that happened with Zach that day changed my aspect on life. In her book *Life Lessons*, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross wrote, "When we face the worst that can happen in any situation, we grow." To me the worst had happened that day with Zach, and I thought I had lost my best friend forever. My appreciation for my life grew, and I realized I shouldn't take things so serious and just enjoy life with people who make me happy. Since that day Zach and I have a stronger value of our friendship, and we both learned to forgive a lot easier and not hold grudges. As a person I grew to learn not to take anyone for granted and be thankful for the good times I get to spend with them.

what aspect changed?

How?

Ernie Aquino

Basic Writing

Narrative Essay

November 18, 2011

A Day in September

It was a pretty normal morning day in September, a hint of cool weather in the air. The place was downtown New York. I was in the Immigration and Naturalization Service building where I worked. My co-workers and supervisors were all in the conference room getting ready for a meeting. Then we got a call to the building to evacuate because of something terrible that had just happened. After coming outside what I saw was more than my mind could comprehend. What followed opened my eyes, and it showed me to embrace life.

I woke up in the morning like any other day. Thinking to myself, "Ah another day, another dollar." Completely unaware about what was going to go down. I proceeded to get ready for work. I remember having to get dressed up in shoes, dress pants, shirt and tie for a very important meeting at work that day. The normal dress code was casual. The dress attire was not comfortable at all for the physical episodes later on that day. I walked to the train station, \got on the A train and met with my buddy from work, Chris, a few stops down. We rode the train to Chamber Street, our stop for work. We got off and walked a few streets over. We arrived to work. I checked my email and prepared my work for the day. Routinely everything was on point. The day was running smoothly so far. Everybody was called in to meet up at the conference room. Minutes later the phone rang, "Ring, Ring, Ring!" The supervisor picked up the phone. It was a direct order from a manager of the building to evacuate. A disastrous event had just happened. Everyone needed to get out, not now but right now!

Instantly, everyone was panicking but trying to stay together. We got an order to take the stairs. The elevators are not an option when something of this nature happens. Everyone proceeded down the stairs at a very fast pace, almost running. People were nervous and scared, still in the dark about what was happening. Some people were falling down the stairs, especially the older ones. Others behind them were stumbling and stepping over them unintentionally. Some men stopped to help carry out others that were hurt on the floor. With all the traffic down the stairs, we finally reached the lobby and stepped outside. Total chaos is what we encountered. Why? We still did not know.

Everyone was pointing up in complete shock, so we all looked up at the same time. We witnessed an enormous hole of raging fire spreading quickly all around one of the Twin Towers. "A plane just crashed into it," shouted a man in the street.

Immediately I heard, "Oh no, Oh no, Oh my God, Oh my God," from Chris as we're looking at the tower.

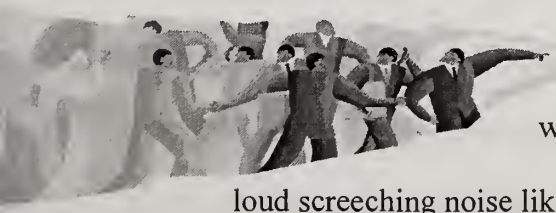
"What happened? What happened?" I asked.

He shouted, "My brothers work there."

"Oh no, were they working today?" I asked.

He replied, "I don't know, I need a phone." There were no working phones, cell phones and pay phones included, nor transportation due to what was happening at the time. All forms of communication were down.

We were trying to gather ourselves to help each other out. There were people running



and screaming in fear over family members that worked in the Towers. In the moment we heard a very loud screeching noise like of a plane that is about to land. It was a second plane. It hit the second tower building like, "Boom!" It was a massive explosion. All you heard was

the exploding breaking glass of the buildings, ear-piercing screams of people holding on to their lives who were trapped, some letting go because they would rather fall than burn in the fire that was consuming the building. The inferno was unimaginable.

At this point everyone was one hundred percent sure that it was a terrorist attack. Now the first building started to come down, it collapsed. A cloud of smoky debris started to move its way toward us. We started to run together with the mob of people all around us. Chris and I were running together; we lived in the same direction. There were people on the ground crying over their loved ones in the building. Chris was in bad shape because his two brothers worked in the building. He did not know their whereabouts, but somehow down the line we were able to communicate with his family. His brothers had taken the day off. So that was some good news for both us. It gave us some kind of hope for the rest of the day to come because the moment felt like the world was coming to an end.

At this point the second tower collapsed. The debris, smoke, and dust were disastrous. People were still scrambling trying to get free from the horror. The firemen, police, and ambulances remained close to the towers trying to save people. We were now walking uptown. We stopped at a store that happened to have some media connection working. We were informed of other attacks in the U.S. Now we were more devastated about everything that was happening. There were talks about a plane crashing somewhere in some farmlands. There was another plane that crashed into the Pentagon. People in the media were saying that they think the attacks were probably from Afghanistan's terrorist groups or Al Qaida.

We walked until 96th Street, about a hundred blocks, the wardrobe and shoes were not doing justice right now. We were still about twenty streets away from Chris's home. We were about one hundred streets more away from my home. We were both desperate to get back to our families to make sure that everyone was accounted for. Then, a yellow cab

driver happened to be in the area with about five other passengers. He gave us a ride. Somehow we all found a way to fit in the car. The cab driver started dropping people off at their destinations; he took Chris to his home. We said goodbye in a very exhausted way. We were relieved that we got through it, but felt terrible for others and anxiety for answers about these tragedies. Then I got home. My family members were outside concerned about what had happened. They were very happy to see that I was alive and well. I was finally able to sit down and reflect on the past few hours that had just passed. "Did I really just live through that?" I asked myself.

Sitting down with my family at that instant was when I realized I had changed. The past few hours I had experienced flashed by in my mind as if I were living the last few seconds of my life. There were questions I asked myself about how I was formerly living and how I should be.

Before 9/11, I was a rebel without a cause. I did not have a sure path for my life. I lived each day with no concern for anything or anyone going on around me. It was all about me. My family used to have events for birthdays and anniversaries, and I never cared to join them. I was too busy living my life to be bothered. Most of the time I let emotions like anger and disappointment get the best of me. I also used to be satisfied with the daily occurrences of my life. I did not care to experience or learn anything new.

I no longer take the important things in my life for granted. Before 9/11 I really did not pay much mind to taking advantage of everyday life and connecting with family. After this experience I did a 180 degree turn. Now I call my family members more often and spend quality time with them. I try to get into new activities to help me think outside the box I realized I was living in before the events of this September day. Getting out of my comfort zone is another thing I do for challenge and excitement. I am keeping more of a positive attitude in any

situation. I also care more about my future, enjoying every minute, and striving to accomplish my goals.

I will never forget this day. I think about it often. It is a significant day in our history that I was actually a part of. On every anniversary of 9/11, Chris and I talk on the phone and reminisce on the overall experience. Ten years have passed and to this day we are still in awe of that day and grateful to have made it out of that situation unharmed.

The details of that day and who was responsible started developing in the next few days and weeks. There was speculation all over the news about who did it and why. Al Qaida, Saddam Hussein, Bin Laden, the Taliban—all of these were in the mouths of reporters trying to unveil who was the mastermind behind these attacks. Ultimately, we went to war with Iraq, a war we are still fighting to this day. There have been books written about what truly happened. To this day I am unsure about who really planned these attacks, and who is truly responsible. All I know for a fact is that more than 3,000 people lost their lives in the attacks and more lost their lives at war. I think about the stories I hear about the people that escaped death because of a simple glitch in the routine of their day: my cousin's husband who worked in the first tower and had taken the day off to go fishing, Chris's brother who had taken the day off for an appointment, and many others whose stories we learned of in the years following the attacks – of alarms not going off or colds that prevented them from going into work on that day. Their lives must have also changed in some major way. I know that if I were in their shoes I would feel as if I were given a second chance at life.

These tragic events of 9/11 changed my way of thinking because now I am grateful for every moment I get to live. It showed me to enjoy others, enjoy everything you do because in a split second your life or loved ones can be taken away from you. It also changed the way I view life — to concentrate more on what is important in life, like loved ones. That day, 9/11, showed

me to benefit from every moment. As famous author Alan Cohen once said, "Scared and sacred are spelled with the same letters. Awful proceeds from the same root word as awesome. Terrify and terrific. Every negative experience holds the seed of transformation." Keep a positive outlook in life because life is short. It is amazing how a few hours shaped the rest of my being. Life will pass you by without notice, and then you will look back and wonder — where did the time go?

Dayna Baumgartner

Basic Writing

Media Essay

March 27, 2012

What's On Your Mind?

Social media has become an addiction for a large number of the population, including myself. Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and the formerly popular Myspace started out as attracting mostly teens and young adults, and over the past few years have become a pastime for millions, ranging from children to the elderly. As a matter of fact, my grandparents even have a Facebook account. For me, Facebook has been a positive way for me to connect with friends and family across the nation. The network has been an important tool for me because I am able to share stories and pictures with loved ones; I have found friends and family members that I haven't seen in many years and was able to use it to reach out to many people to help raise money for a fundraiser.

First of all, Facebook allows me to share pictures, videos, and funny stories with those in my life that don't get to see me every day. I have family all over the United States, some who have never met my children. Through the sharing of pictures and the funny stories I share about my kids, in a sense, they are given a chance to see my children grow. Also, I am able to share important life events, like when I started school and when I got engaged, without having to make fifty seven phone calls. For instance, I recently shared a story about my four year old son, Khyden, which had many people roaring with laughter. I told my 488 friends on Facebook how he innocently asked me why I had a moustache, and if I was going to be his dad now. He then proceeded to call me "Daddy with your big moustache" for the rest of the day, which forced me to go home and immediately wax my upper lip. I myself, though

embarrassed, got a good chuckle out of this, so I thought sharing it may brighten the day of some others. It was one of my most popular posts yet, receiving many "likes" and comments.

Also, through Facebook I have found many old friends from my childhood and quite a few from high school, but more importantly, about a year ago I was able to find my cousin, Leah, who I hadn't seen since we were about eight or nine years old. Her father, my Uncle James, was out of the picture from not only her but our whole family, so she had no connection to any of us since she was a small child. She is thirty years old now, and has connected with close to thirty of her relatives, one being me, and some of whom she didn't even know she had. I was the closest cousin to Leah's age. We were very close before her mother moved away and lost all contact with my family, and I have always wondered about her. I pondered where she was, what she looked like, if she had children or was married. I found out she has a seven year old daughter named Olivia and she works as a hairdresser. I find it intriguing to be able to go through her pictures and her statuses and see how much her life has changed since we were just adolescents. The same goes for my childhood friends and high school friends that I haven't seen in years. It still amazes me how some of them are exactly the same and how some are completely different from what I remember.

Last and most important, I was able to raise $1,800 to help a family that is very dear to my heart, and I did it strictly through the use of Facebook. On February 4th of this year, my son's trainer, Jeff, was struck and killed by a train. My son Shawn is eight years old, and his dream is to be a professional boxer. Before starting boxing my son suffered with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and severe anxiety, and he has changed tremendously since he began working with Jeff. I work with Jeff's mother, and through her son that she tragically lost, I was able to see a side of my son that I thought I would never experience. He has a whole new confidence, and I owe it all to Jeff. These are the reasons that I collaborated with a family

member of mine, who was also a close friend of Jeff's, and he created a decal of a boxing glove that read, "R.I.P. Jeff Fraza - always in our hearts." The glove included his date of birth and the day he passed. I spread the news on Facebook that we were selling the decals for $5 each, and in just a few weeks, we were able to raise $1,800 to help the Fraza family with funeral costs and to give Jeff's mother, Kathy, enough time out of work to grieve. I was amazed at the outcome, only expecting to raise a few hundred dollars. Without Facebook, I never would have been able to reach out to so many people about the decals.

Many view Facebook as a poisonous addiction that has the potential to cause havoc and break families apart. Too often you hear in the news of another teen that has committed suicide due to Facebook bullying. Also, I have seen many marriages and relationships end due to this social network. Some may get the feeling of insecurity that their loved one is cheating or communicating with lovers from their past. Others feel as though their significant other puts Facebook before them. Many even take the well-known phrase, "What's on your mind?" a little too literally. This phrase lures them into airing their dirty laundry, saying things such as, "I can't believe my husband stayed out all night getting drunk with his friends." In turn, this person may not realize that their 432 friends are all talking about the rage between the husband and wife, causing quite an embarrassment for both parties. To say that I have never been disappointed by Facebook would be a lie, as I have seen many things that disgust me and have had my own name slandered on Facebook. However, I feel that if Facebook were only used for good and not used as a weapon to defame others, initiate arguments, and lead some to temptation; it would have the potential to change so many things in this world for the better. Without the drama, Facebook could be a world of happy reunions, a place for a person to turn to for advice rather than

negativity, or thousands joining forces to make a difference in the fight against bullying, hunger, cancer, autism, and an abundance of other issues our nation faces.

In conclusion, I imagine my life would be perfectly normal if Facebook never existed, but I can't imagine my life without it now. I enjoy sharing pertinent information at the click of a button, and I am sure that the many family and friends that I am not always able to contact enjoy my ramblings and updated photos of the kids. From another perspective, my kids are also able to see pictures of family members, such as my aunt in Florida, who they would otherwise not remember, as they see them so seldom. I can honestly say that Facebook has changed my life tremendously, because even though it is loaded with negativity, seeing these comments from another person remind me that I don't ever want to be that miserable, and keep me motivated to stay positive and continue on to become all that I can be.

Della Lee Fairbanks

Basic Writing

Media Essay

April 2, 2012

My New Favorite Toy: My Kindle

I was given an Amazon Kindle for Christmas two years ago. I was excited about the Kindle because I had heard about it, but I didn't think I would ever have one of my own. I have had many hours of entertainment using my Kindle. It helps me relax after a long day at work or school. I like that I can go online and download a book, a game or recipes. I use my Kindle for reading books, playing word games, and finding recipes.

First of all, I love reading and when I got my Kindle I was excited to download books. My husband told me about Project Gutenberg, a website www.gutenberg.com that offers 38,000 book selections that you can download for free. I was interested in finding a book that I read as a child, but had not found in bookstores. The book is called *Christie's Old Organ* by Mrs. O. F. Walton. I searched the Gutenberg website and to my great delight I found the book. I immediately downloaded the book and I read the entire book that same night. Even though this book has a sad story about a boy named Christie who became an orphan, it also has a beautiful spiritual message. After Christie's mother dies he helps an old friend, a forlorn old organ-grinder, whose organ plays "Home, sweet home." This was the last tune Christie's mother had sung before dying and going to her eternal home. Christie helps the organ-grinder find his way to heaven. I remember as a young child this story being read to me. When I became older and was able to read I read the book myself. It brings back a lot of fond memories.

Secondly, I like playing word games after a long day and it helps relax me. The word game I like playing the most is *Thread Words*. The goal of the game is to make words that match up the shapes and you then move to the next level. Each level the words get longer and you can either have a relaxed game or a timed game; whatever you prefer. I like the challenge and it can be addicting because once a game is started you want to complete it. So far I have only gotten to level five. One day last week I had a really long day at work and I just wanted to unwind. I took my Kindle with me to bed and I just rested against my pillows and turned on my Kindle to the game *Thread Words*. I played for two hours and then I was able to turn out the light and sleep. It was just what I needed after a long day of carrying and holding a crying child who didn't want me to leave her side, wiping noses, and making sure the children were being kind to each other.

Thirdly, I enjoy finding new recipes and with the Kindle I can download an entire cookbook. I have quite the collection of cookbooks and magazines. I like trying new recipes and with the click of a button I can have a new recipe. I was so excited on Sunday I downloaded two new *Taste of Home* recipe books from their website. Normally if I purchase a hardcover cookbook it costs thirty dollars or more but I was able to download two books for $7.98. I was like a kid in a candy store checking out all the different recipes I can try for my family. A recipe that I found was Slow-Cooker Lasagna. I decided I would give the recipe a try, so Saturday I went to the grocery store and purchased the ingredients. It was very easy to get the ingredients ready and put it in the slow-cooker; within three hours it was ready. The results were wonderful; both my husband and I enjoyed it. The recipe was a success and I will definitely make it again. Whether it's a recipe for a slow-cooker that can be started in the morning to cook all day, so there is a hot meal awaiting the family at the end of the day, or a thirty minute meal that can quickly be made when there is not a lot of time to prepare, it definitely cuts down on the

time getting dinner ready. I can go on my Kindle, click a button, and go to the table of contents and immediately find the recipe I'm looking for without too much effort and quickly have a meal ready in thirty minutes for my family. To me the Kindle is a handy little gadget to have. I can't imagine not having it in my life.

Even though the Kindle has many great qualities some people see the Kindle with a down side. I recently read an article with the title “Is Kindle Burning the Book Industry?” It will cause publishing companies to lose revenue from book sales, which in turn will cause people to lose their jobs and inevitably the company to close. Book lovers will resort to downloading books instead of buying an actual book. Novella Carpenter writes in the San Francisco Chronicle, "I had always thought that books were recession-proof, that most people facing a night at home due to budgetary constraints would gladly curl up with a mug of hot water, put on extra socks to keep the nip of their unheated apartment at bay, and read." Clearly, this is not the case. Bookstores are suffering, and the article suggests that, "The Kindle, an electronic book sold by Amazon.com, will no doubt take away more book buying customers." Even though I personally enjoy my Kindle very much I would not go cold turkey and never buy a book again. There is just something thrilling about going into a bookstore and walking down aisles of shelves lined with books, and to be able to pick up a novel and hold it in your hands or read the back cover to discover what the story is going to be about, or deciding whether to buy one book or a series to add to the collection. The ultimate thrill is to purchase the book and go home and curl up in bed to read the book that you lovingly picked out.

I think having a Kindle is great because it's lightweight and easy to take it with you anywhere. It is very easy to use, it's affordable, can hold 3,500 books, and has free wireless, and a two month battery life. You have the option of using the Internet or just reading a book. It definitely helps relax me whether I am reading an old book from childhood days, playing a word

game, or finding a new recipe. *The Chicago Tribune* wrote, "The basic Kindle e-reader from Amazon now starts at $79, a price point that's very hard to resist. It seems that those of us late-adopters who have hung back will be nicely rewarded for our patience and circumspection." I am glad that the person who decided that the Kindle would make a great gift had a great idea. It is something that I have used for many hours and has had great enjoyment. I would recommend a Kindle to anyone. It is definitely my favorite new toy.

Armidys Anico

Basic Writing

Media Essay

November 1, 2011

Music and Me

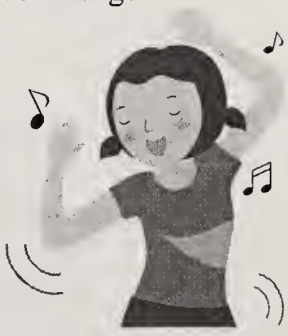
As far as I can remember music has always been present in my life, yet despite its presence music didn't really have much meaning to me. Don't get me wrong; I enjoyed music and wouldn't turn down an opportunity to move my body and shake my hips to the latest beats, but I merely used music as a form of entertainment, and not really connecting or listening to the unscripted message in any specific song. Then everything changed and music all of a sudden became a very big part of my daily life. Music keeps me on the right track because it relaxes me, helps me deal with life struggles and setbacks, and keeps me motivated and focused.

Music has this unstoppable power to relax me and to uplift my spirit almost to a different dimension. I know this might sound too deep or even a little crazy. Music to me is like a drug, the more you get the more you want. It does not matter how bad my day is going or how stressed I might be or how blue I feel all I have to do is tune in to one of my favorite songs, and for those four or five minutes my mind just wanders into this happy place in which I find joy and clarity, and the best part of it is that after the song is over most likely I experience the immediate change. I feel energized, refreshed; it's like a mini vacation. Therefore, I could easily state that this feeling I get from music is often more rewarding than sex, but then again, the combination of music and sex; that's a different story. The point is that music makes everything better.

In addition, music also helps me when it's time to deal with daily life struggles and setbacks. In the article, "Music Psychology and Mental Health," written by The Association for Natural Psychology, it states that, "Music can be a positive force for mental health, calming,

relaxing, intellectually stimulating. Music can and does affect our emotions; it can create 'channels' in our mind, patterns of thinking. It can impart ideas and ideologies, powerfully and emotionally conveying a way of life." All I have to say about this is, "Hell yeah!" I agree 100%. I can easily recall the first time I used music to help me deal with a very difficult, painful situation in my life, a situation I call the worst time of my life. I have never encountered or felt so miserable, sad, impotent, and angry. I was even suicidal, and music basically saved my life. I found out my husband was cheating on me. I felt like if life was taken from me. That's when I discovered the power that music can have over me. Almost like sent by God, I found songs that literately kept me alive. Everything from betrayal songs to inspirational ones, songs that made me cry like Christina Aguilera's song, "You Lost Me" and songs that make me feel strong and invincible like "Rolling In The Deep" by Adele, just to name a few.

Last but not least, music helps me to keep motivated and focused. Sometimes it feels like distractions and situations could easily take away from me trying to accomplish my goals and from my ability to enjoy the things that matter the most. From the moment I wake up in the morning I have to deal with a million things all at once. I am always on the go, and I have too many responsibilities. It could be overwhelming at times. I am a single mother. I have two little kids who depend on me 100% , a house and bills, a broken heart, uncomfortable situations to deal with, and to top it all off I recently decided to go back to college. Ha, what was I thinking? At times I feel like just giving up; I feel like quitting. Just when I think I'm close to the brink, I take out my iPad, look for my iPod application, connect it to the speakers and let the music flow. I sing along and I dance around my house either by myself or with my two children and everything seems better. The stress melts away and the doubt of me being able to surpass all the obstacles keeping me from reaching my ultimate goals just disappears. Bring it on life; I'm ready for the next round.



I remember years ago when my love for music did not exist; all the times I drove my car with the radio off because I thought it was an unnecessary distraction and how I couldn't understand the reason why all my friends always listened to music everywhere they went. Music and I have come a long way; now we are inseparable. Music in my life often has the ability to relax me and to clear my mind so that I am able to deal with daily life struggles and setbacks, and last but not least, music keeps me focused and motivated to continue in the journey towards reaching my life goals.

Emily Cole

Basic Writing

Opinion Essay

4/21/12

Ban Texting While Driving

Recently there has been an uprise in the debate over banning texting while driving. Carolyn McCarthy, a New York Democrat in the House of Representatives, argues that there should be a ban because of the danger level texting while driving brings. However, in his article, "Should Text Messaging While Driving Be Banned? NO," Radley Balko, senior editor for *Reason* magazine, argues that there should not be a ban because it is a law that would be too hard to enforce fairly. My personal opinion is that there should be a law banning text messaging while driving because it is dangerous and risky. After reading Carolyn McCarthy's article, "Should Text Messaging While Driving Be Banned? YES." I feel even more confident in my opinion that there should be a law banning texting while driving.

Texting while driving is a very risky and dangerous activity that can put the driver's life and the lives of people around them in danger; there is a time and place to text. It distracts you from driving by taking your eyes off the road and your hands off the wheel. McCarthy wrote in her article, "I firmly believe that there is a time and place to be texting, but one situation where there is no excuse to be manipulating a hand-held device is while operating a moving vehicle" (2). I agree with this quote. Texting isn't the problem, it is when people decide to check a message or send one while driving that is the problem. People need to learn how to wait until they get to a safe place to check their phone. Like recent billboards and commercials I have seen, "No text is worth losing your life!" A lot can happen in that two to five seconds you take your eyes off the road to check a message.

Texting while driving is just like drunk driving. When you are drunk driving your focus on driving is tampered with and you can't give your full attention to driving. When sending or reading a text message you're not giving your full attention to the road. McCarthy writes in her article, "Another study, published by Car and Driver magazine in June, concluded that texting while driving can be more dangerous than drunk driving" (3). When I read this quote I wasn't surprised at all. Texting and driving is right up there in the danger and distraction level. When you compare the two side by side drunk driving and texting while driving have a lot of impairment similarities.

The law that bans texting while driving has already been put in place in some states, but I think that it should be banned in all states across the country. Texting while driving is something that happens all over the country and the danger level doesn't change because you are down south, up north, out west or on the east coast. It is dangerous everywhere! McCarthy wrote in her article, "Inconsistent laws across our country serve only to confuse drivers and embolden those who text and drive" (4). This is very true. Driving through different states and not knowing what the law is very confusing, not that you should text and drive even if there isn't a law. One law across the whole country banning texting while driving will get rid of the all the confusion and hopefully get more people to put their phones away when behind the wheel.

Although putting a ban on texting and driving won't get everyone to put their phones away and drive, it could get people to start thinking, yes, this is a very dangerous activity that many of us choose to do daily. McCarthy made very good points in her article. From comparing it to drunk driving, to saying it should be banned across the country and that there is a time and a place to text, all of which I agree with completely. When there is a law across the country banning texting while driving I'll feel a little safer on the roads hoping that people are actually following the law even though it is not completely enforceable.

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Loyra Perez

Basic Writing

Opinion Essay

April 11, 2012

Fast Digital Connection

In the debate over teen texting, the issue of the impact texting has on teens has been raised. On the one hand Natalie Smith, author of the article, "Luv 2 Txt," argues that texting has a beneficial impact on teens, helping them build stronger relationships and technical skills while also teaching them how to be more concise and to individualize themselves. On the other hand, Katie Hafner, author of the article, "Texting May Be Taking a Toll," argues that texting is harming teens, from causing sleep deprivation and failing grades to more serious health and mental problems. In my opinion, texting is beneficial for teens when used in moderation.

First of all, teens benefit from texting because it helps them to develop their technical skills. Today we live in more of a digital age where we rely on technology more and more in our day to day lives. When teens text it provides them interaction with technology and the more they use it the better they understand it. In her article "Luv 2 Text," Natalie Smith refers to Scott Campbell, an assistant professor of communication studies at the University of Michigan; Smith writes, "Campbell believes that sending and receiving texts allows teens to develop new technical skills. He says that this makes teens more competent communicators in the digital age" (3). Simply put, teens texting everyday provides practice and therefore development of their technical skills making them more efficient and skilled with technology.

Having strong technical skills is something important and valuable in today's world. Texting has helped develop my technical skills. As a teenager I texted every single day at all times of the day. Using my phone so much I learned how to use and insert symbols in my text

that weren't even on the keypad. Because of texting I learned how to copy and paste and how to show emotions through my texts with the use of symbols (emoticons). For example, one day my mom came into my room asking me for help with a message she was writing to my aunt. My mom was just learning what texting was, let alone how to use it, and she had no idea what she was doing. So she came into my room and said, "Hey, Loyra, I need your help for a second."

"Sure. What's up?" I replied.

"I want to send your aunt a text and I want to draw one of those smiley face things and a heart you do in your texts."

I looked at her dumbfounded. Are you serious I thought? Who doesn't know how to do that nowadays? I had my answer right in front of me. My mom didn't. I told her, "Let me see your phone."

She handed me her phone and I quickly inserted the emoticon and heart for her how she wanted and handed her back the phone in a matter of seconds. "Wow!" she exclaimed, "You did that in no time. You'll have to teach me how to do that."

I laughed, "Sure Mom."

I showed her how to put in the emoticons and the heart. She was so fascinated and amazed that I knew how to do all this and how fast I could do it, while I consider it to be some of the basics of texting. This shows how important it is to have basic technical skills in today's world. Technology is incorporated in our day to day life more nowadays. Without having these technical skills teens wouldn't be able to keep up.

Another way teens benefit from texting is that texting helps them to stay connected. Today the main way teens stay connected to their friends is through text. They text friends they may not see every day. This helps them stay connected with them even if they live in another town, go to a different school, are in a different grade, etc. Let's face it; one of the most

important things in a teenager's life is their friends. In her article, Smith quotes Campbell, who says, "They're using the technology to connect with their peers and be sociable which is important for them at that point in life" (2). In other words teens text to stay connected. It is important to them to stay in communication with their friends which texting allows them to do. Campbell believes that teens learn to identify themselves through their friends (2). So since texting allows them to stay connected to their friends, it will also lead to them to individuality. Through texting they communicate and express themselves freely creating their own language and sense of individuality.

Texting has also helped me stay connected to friends who weren't in the same grade or school with me, especially with my best friend, Jenny. I have known Jenny since I was seven years old. She lived in the same apartment building as me and was the only other girl around my age. She was almost two years older than me and was a grade ahead of me in school. When I was twelve years old she moved to New York. We would talk on the phone every day at first but slowly we started to lose contact because of different schedules and such. That all changed when I got my cell phone and learned how to text. Jenny and I started texting every day. Texting saved our friendship!!! Even though we lived in different states, my best friend and I stayed connected and knew everything that was going on in each other's life. This was all possible because of texting.

Texting is also beneficial because it's a faster way to communicate. In today's world everything moves at a faster pace. The faster you get things done the better, including communication. Texting allows teens to keep up and communicate faster and more efficiently with their friends. In her article Smith quotes Jenny Kreps, a 15 year old from Ridgefield, Connecticut, who says, "It's fast communication. I think it's easier than calling because you can still be doing something else while texting. You don't have to give your undivided attention to it"

(2). In other words texting is faster, easier, and allows teens to multitask. Teens can text and have multiple conversations while still being able to do something else like laundry all at once. Jenny also says that texting helps her be more concise and get right to the point (2). Texting helps teens be fast and direct and to get their point across clearer. Being more concise is a beneficial skill for teens to have because when communicating they can clearly say what they want to say. This makes teens communicate without misinterpretations.

Communicating with my friends faster is very beneficial to me too. I remember when many of my friends thought I neglected them because I'll spend my time talking on the phone with one person while also trying to get my chores and homework done all at the same time. Texting saved me. Now when I'm doing household chores I have conversations with all my friends all at the same time. This not only helps me concentrate on what I'm doing at home, but also talk to all my friends so none of them feel excluded. While I send a text to one of my friends I have time in between to text another friend or finish what I'm doing while they reply to my text. Nowadays I don't feel so overwhelmed because texting allows me to multitask and communicate in a fast way.

All in all, I believe texting is beneficial for teens. It helps them build their technical skills while also helping them stay connected in a faster way. When used in moderation, I believe texting could be extremely beneficial. I think adults should educate themselves more about texting and how to use it properly. This way they can see it in a positive aspect and they could teach teens how to use texting responsibly. I think once parents do this and no longer look at texting negatively there will be more connections between them and their teens. As humans I believe that whenever we are presented with a new way of doing something we look at it negatively because we are afraid of change. I believe that with education and proper use, texting is a new part of technology we can embrace with open arms.

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Tracey Lawrence

Basic Writing

Opinion Essay

April 5, 2012

Dropping Out at Eighteen vs. Sixteen

The right to drop out of high school at all is an extremely controversial issue everywhere. Most recently there is a debate here in Massachusetts on whether the dropout age should be raised from sixteen to eighteen. Personally, I believe anyone has the confidence deep down to stay and finish high school to get an education. I think everyone should be forced to graduate no matter what age; however that is not the law they're trying to pass. In my own personal opinion, I believe the high school dropout age should be raised to eighteen.

By the age of eighteen, students should be a little more mature than a sixteen year old would be if they're considering dropping out of high school. There are so many excuses for dropping out. In their article, "The True Cost of High School Dropouts," Henry M. Levin and Cecilia E. Rouse state, "Only 7 of 10 ninth graders today will get high school diplomas"(1). I think if the age is changed to eighteen then those numbers would dramatically change to 9 out of 10 ninth graders getting a diploma. This law would be an improvement for all of us in Massachusetts. I really hope it passes. At sixteen most teens are only thinking about themselves. They worry about getting their driver's licenses or who is doing what on Friday night. At eighteen most teens have a part time job and have experienced life a little more. With more responsibility comes the maturity level they need to make life changing decisions. If they are still in high school at eighteen and want to drop out or stay to earn that diploma, then they have the maturity level to make that choice.

At eighteen years old there are more job opportunities for everyone. Most employers require you to be eighteen or older these days compared to about ten years ago. By the age of eighteen a lot of students have either graduated already or understand how important it is to finish what they have started. In an article called "Pou: It's time to raise the dropout age" by Nellie Pou on NorthJersey.com she states, "Today, the skilled jobs that comprise our economy require a high school diploma- at the absolute least"(1). This is so true. She is telling us that most employers want you to have a diploma, but many places even require a college degree or certificate. That is why I am back in school at thirty four years old. I graduated high school but dropped out of college, and I can't find a decent job without at least a certificate. However if someone really wants to leave school and is old enough, then give it a shot. I've seen many kids get turned down for a job if they're under eighteen. My husband, who is a kitchen manager at the Phoenician Restaurant here in Haverhill, is not allowed to hire anyone under eighteen. The job opportunities are one more good reason to raise the dropout age.

It is a proven fact that most people who drop out of high school end up costing taxpayers lots of money each year. With the economy as bad as it is right now a lot of people are on welfare or get financial help from the state. All that money comes from our pay checks. Nellie Pou also states in her article, "…studies have shown dropouts also rely more on government services and programs than those with a diploma, adding to the costs to taxpayers" (1). My parents both dropped out of high school, and I remember my mother sending me to the store all the time with food stamps to buy milk or whatever we needed. I had all hand me down clothes from my older cousins. I don't ever remember wearing anything brand new of my own until I had my first job. I wouldn't wish that life on anyone. If a sixteen year old was thinking of dropping out I would tell them to stay in high school and get a college education so you can

support yourself and a family someday. If the age of dropping out is raised that would mean more graduates and less government handouts. It might even save taxpayers some money.

I firmly believe anyone can stay in school until they graduate. I have been supporting myself since I was about fifteen or sixteen. I was in high school with a full time job on nights and weekends. I moved out on my own at seventeen. I stayed in school with high honors. There was another girl who was in my classes who had a baby our sophomore year and still graduated. I've seen a lot and didn't get a whole lot of sleep back then but I did it and anyone can if their heart is in it. In my opinion, raising the dropout age to eighteen is a great idea, not only in Massachusetts but all over the country. I really think kids are more mature, they will have so much more opportunities in the job market which will lead to saving money for taxpayers.

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Works Cited

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Alba Castillo

Basic Writing

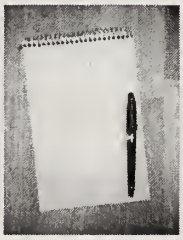
Reflection Essay

Spring 2012

Easier Than Ever

When I began the Basic Writing course, I said to myself: "It will be really hard." The reason was that I thought that writing in English was not easy when English was not my first language. Fortunately, the Basic Writing course taught me that writing can be easier than ever when I follow the whole writing process. However, this course represented a challenge for me. In Basic Writing I have learned that in order to write a good essay, I need to do prewriting, revising, and editing.

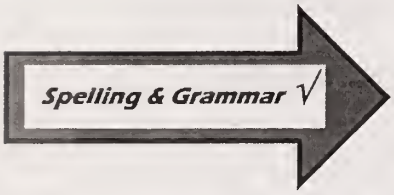
First, I learned that prewriting helps me to find many ideas regarding the topic. I can do prewriting by using different techniques, such as visualizing, answering questions or simply doing free writing. For example, one prewriting activity that I enjoyed the most was for the person essay. The idea of drawing my best friend on paper was very funny, and at the same time, it was very helpful because through drawing I could realize my friend physically. When I read a topic, I have to write all my thoughts about it at that moment. It is important to write them because I could forget some important ideas which are relevant to develop that topic with efficiency. Prewriting is an excellent way to make writing an essay easier.



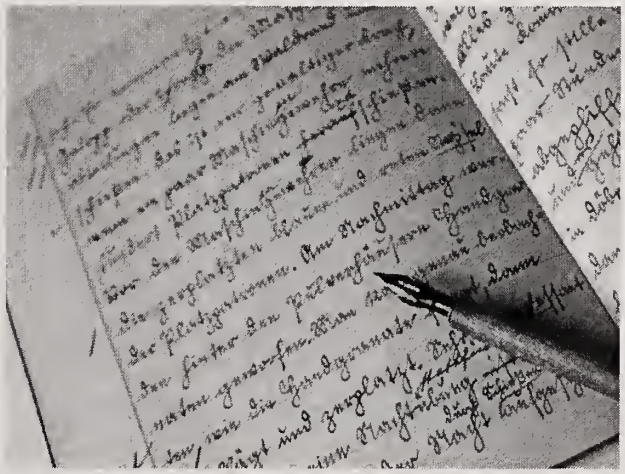
Moreover, I also learned that revising is a very important step in the writing process. After I have composed my first draft, revising helps me to expand and organize my ideas with more significant details and a better structure. While I am revising the first draft, I need to make sure that it has a complete structure, such as an introduction, a strong thesis statement, some

body paragraphs to support my thesis and a conclusion. In the same way, I cannot forget to include transitions sentences at the beginning and at the end of each paragraph. Transitions make my essay more convincing and logical. For example, I noticed it in my media essay, which was not accepted the first time because the conclusion sentences were missing in the body paragraphs. A purpose of revising is to make the essay more efficient and coherent.

Finally, something that I will never forget about this course is the importance of editing an essay. Editing is to revise my draft in order to recognize my grammar, spelling and punctuation errors. It is critical for every writer, and essential, for those who do not have English as their first language like me. I personally have to pay attention to prepositions, word forms, and run-on sentences. Editing also includes reading my rough draft aloud to myself which is very helpful to identify some common grammar errors. Editing can never be missing in the writing process.



In Basic Writing, I had my most successful essays and my most frustrating essays to write. My most successful essay was the object essay. This topic inspired me to write all that I had in my heart about the Bible, "My Wise Advisor," and I put all of my love into it when I wrote it. In addition, it was my best because I did not have too many grammar errors. On the other hand, my most frustrating essay was the media essay. I gave my biggest effort on it but I was not aware of my grammar errors which made me very disappointed with my writing. However, I enjoyed thinking about anecdotes and examples, writing a conclusion, and meeting with a tutor at the Writing Center.

Certainly, I have a better attitude toward writing after I took this course. I feel more confident in my writing skills, and I can see that I am improving day by day. For my future courses, my plan is to follow every step from this writing course, and I will never forget to work

on my grammar errors to write a better essay. I am very thankful for this course. It taught me to follow all necessary steps in order to write a good essay, such as doing prewriting to get all my ideas about it, revising to make my essay more efficient, and editing to identify any grammatical errors. Now, instead of being really hard, writing could be easier than ever.